

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:
JOHN M. CURRAN

Application No.: 10/613,539

Filing Date: 07/03/03

FOR: IMPROVED SYSTEM AND
METHOD FOR FACILITATING PIPE AND
CONDUIT COUPLING

DECLARATION OF JOSEPH R. EVANNS
IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSE TO NOTICE
OF NON-COMPLIANT AMENDMENT
03/24/06;

EXAMINER: J. M. HEWITT

Art Unit: 3679

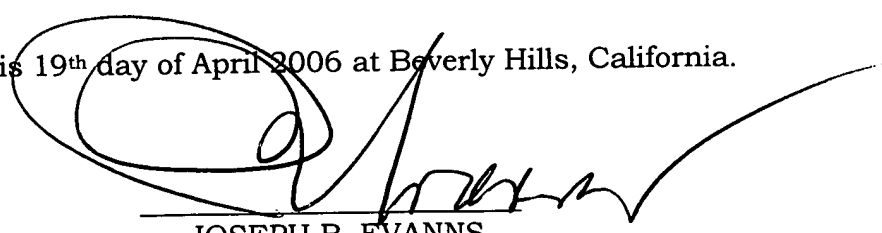
Joseph R. Evanns hereby declares as follows:

- (1) My name is Joseph R. Evanns. My address is 119 North San Vicente Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California 90211. I am admitted to practice in all courts in the State of California and in numerous U.S. District Courts, and Appellate Courts, as well as before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. I am the attorney for the Applicant herein. I make this Declaration on personal knowledge and have first-hand familiarity with the contents hereof. If called as a witness, I could and would competently and truthfully testify in accordance herewith.
- (2) On November 14, 2005 I caused to be filed in the United States Patent and Trademark Office in connection with the within patent application an Amendment in Response to Office Action dated 08/11/05.

- (3) In the 11/14/05 Amendment, pages 2-10, inclusive, included two separate sections: a section entitled "AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS" (pp. 2-4 inclusive) and a section entitled " - - Listing of Claims - - " (pp. 5-10, inclusive).
- (4) In a telephone conference with the Examiner herein, it appeared that the reason for issuance of a Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment herein mailed 03/24/06, was that said pages 2-10, inclusive, of the 11/14/05 Amendment were missing from the PTO file. After I described to the Examiner the content of said pages 2-10, inclusive, (amendments of Claims 1, 7,9,10,13,14,21,22,26 in approved form on pp. 2-4, inclusive and Listing of all Claims in approved form on said pages 5-10, inclusive), it was agreed that re-submittal of said pages 2-10 inclusive, would sufficiently respond to the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment.
- (5) Accordingly, annexed hereto and incorporated by reference herein as Exhibit 1 is a true, correct and complete copy of pages 2-10, inclusive, of Applicant's Amendment (filed 11/14/05) in Response to Office Action dated 08/11/05, as described above.

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed under penalty of perjury this 19th day of April 2006 at Beverly Hills, California.



JOSEPH R. EVANNS

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Amend Claim 1 as follows:

- Claim 1 (Currently amended). A system for facilitating coupling ~~conduits~~ pipes at their ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship comprising:
- (1) Clamping means for clamping around said pipe ends
said clamping means including at least one screw hole for receiving at least one screw for fastening by securing at least one nut thereon, said clamping means over gasket means and said pipe ends , said at least one screw being configured such that it is loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole prior to fastening of said clamping means;
 - (2) gasket means for interposition between said clamping means and said pipe ends; and
 - (3) retention means engageable with said at least one screw for retaining said one screw in said at least one screw hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by securing said at least one nut with said at least one screw.

Amend Claim 7 as follows:

- Claim 7. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means defines at least one internal opening for being positioned onto said at least one screw from the end of the ~~shank thereof~~ shank thereof.

EXHIBIT 1

Amend Claim 9 as follows:

Claim 9. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally circular configuration.

Amend Claim 10 as follows:

Claim 10. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally square configuration.

Amend Claim 13 as follows:

Claim 13. (Currently amended). In a pipe coupling system for coupling pipe ends in substantially ~~fluid-tight~~ fluid - tight relationship including gasket means positionable on said pipe ends and clamping means fastenable on said pipe ends and said gasket means, said clamping means being fastenable by ~~means of~~ securing at least one nut on said at least one screw insertable through said clamping means, the improvement comprising:

retention means for retaining said at least one screw in place when inserted in said clamping means and prior to fastening of said clamping means by securing said at least one nut on said at least one screw.

Amend Claim 14 as follows:

Claim 14 (Currently amended). The ~~insertion~~-invention asset set forth in claim 13 wherein said retention means is frictionally engageable with said at least one screw.

EXHIBIT 11

Amend Claim 21 as follows:

Claim 21 (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means has a generally circular configuration.

Amend Claim 22 as follows:

Claim 22 (currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means has a generally square configuration.

Amend Claim 26 as follows:

Claim 26 (Currently amended). A method for facilitating coupling at least two conduits at their ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship comprising the steps of:

- (1) providing gasket means for disposition upon said at least two conduits;
- (2) providing clamping means for clamping around said conduit ends and including at least one screw hole for receiving at least one screw for fastening said clamping means upon said gasket means and said conduit ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship by securing at least one nut to said at least one screw;
- (3) placing said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole; and
- (4) disposing retention means in connection with said at least one screw to prevent said at least one screw from exiting said at least one screw hole prior to said fastening of said clamping means and said gasket means.

EXHIBIT 1

- -Listing of Claims - -

Claim 1 (Currently amended).

A system for facilitating coupling ~~conduits~~ pipes at their ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship comprising:

- (1) Clamping means for clamping around said pipe ends
said clamping means including at least one screwhole
for receiving at least one screw for fastening by securing
at least one nut thereon, said clamping means over
gasket means and said pipe ends , said at least one
screw being configured such that it is loosely disposed
in said at least one screw hole prior to fastening of said
clamping means;
- (2) gasket means for interposition between said clamping
means and said pipe ends; and
- (3) retention means engageable with said at least one screw
for retaining said one screw in said at least one screw
hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by
securing said at least one nut with said at least one
screw.

Claim 2. (original).

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said retention means is frictionally engageable with said at least one screw to provide said retention.

Claim 3. (Original).

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said retention means is positionable on the end of the shank of said at least one screw for frictional engagement therewith.

- Claim 4. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.
- Claim 5. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.
- Claim 6. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means is composed of resilient metal.
- Claim 7. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means defines at least one internal opening for being positioned onto said at least one screw from the end of the ~~shank thereof~~ shank thereof.
- Claim 8. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means defines at least one lateral slot for sideways positioning of said retention means upon said at least one screw.
- Claim 9. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally circular configuration.
- Claim 10. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally square configuration.
- Claim 11. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 7 wherein said at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.
- Claim 12. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means includes adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.

Claim 13. (Currently amended). In a pipe coupling system for coupling pipe ends in substantially ~~fluid-tight~~ fluid – tight relationship including gasket means positionable on said pipe ends and clamping means fastenable on said pipe ends and said gasket means, said clamping means being fastenable by ~~means of~~ securing at least one nut on said at least one screw insertable through said clamping means, the improvement comprising:

retention means for retaining said at least one screw in place when inserted in said clamping means and prior to fastening of said clamping means by securing said at least one nut on said at least one screw

Claim 14. (Original). The inserion as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is frictionally engageable with said at least one screw.

Claim 15. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is positionable at the end of the shank of said at least one screw for frictional engagement therewith.

Claim 16. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.

Claim 17. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.

EXHIBIT 1

- Claim 18. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is composed of resilient metal.
- Claim 19. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means defines at least one internal opening for being placed onto said at least one screw from the end of the shank thereof.
- Claim 20. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means defines at least one lateral slot for sidewise placing of said retention means upon said at least one screw.
- Claim 21. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means has a generally circular configuration.
- Claim 22. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means has a generally square configuration.
- Claim 23. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 19 wherein at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.
- Claim 24. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means include adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.
- Claim 25. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is positionable upon said at least one screw from the side of the shank thereof for frictional engagement therewith.

Claim 26 (Currently amended). A method for facilitating coupling at least two conduits at their ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship comprising the steps of:

- (1) providing gasket means for disposition upon said at least two conduits;
- (2) providing clamping means for clamping around said conduit ends and including at least one screw hole for receiving at least one screw for fastening said clamping means upon said gasket means and said conduit ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship by securing at least one nut to said at least one screw;
- (3) placing said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole; and
- (4) disposing retention means in connection with said at least one screw to prevent said at least one screw from exiting said at least one screw hole prior to said fastening of said clamping means and said gasket means.

Claim 27. (Original). The method as set forth in Claim 26 wherein said retention means is frictionally engageable with said at least one screw to accomplish retention thereof.

Claim 28. (Original). The method of Claim 26 further including the step of fastening said gasket means and said clamping means onto said conduit ends by tightening said at least one screw until substantially fluid-tight relationship is achieved between said conduits.

Claim 29. (Original). The method of Claim 26 wherein said conduits comprise pipes.

EXHIBIT 1